

MIDDLESEX COUNTY WORKFORCE INVESTMENT BOARD

BUSINESS OUTREACH TASK FORCE

APRIL 3, 2014

Present: Carla Cefalo for Kathy Shaw, Bernice Venable, Elayne McClaine, Regina Riccioni, Maryann Lovas, Baden Almonor, Veronica Jones

Staff: Nina Rios Rivera, Hilda Alonso, Garret Gega, Jane Brady, Adrienne Keaton

Jane opened the meeting by asking the members to review the minimum wages sheet. For a school to be paid the placement hold back, the participant must obtain employment for the minimum wage listed on the ITA contract and for at least 25 hours/week. Staff recently reviewed and updated the minimum wage for each occupation. Jane asked the members to review and if they notice any glaring concerns of either a minimum wage being too high or too low to please contact her so it can be changed.

Jane also informed the members that the On Ramp software used by the state for J4J participants has no feature that removes a resume once it is placed on J4j. That means an employer may contact 4 people for employment and they all may already have jobs but there is no way to remove their resume except individually at the state level. This is frustrating and annoying for the employers. Jane has been corresponding with the state regarding this issue and the state hopes to implement an upgrade for this and other issues by mid -year. When they bought the software, they thought it included this feature, but it does not.

Nina gave the report for the Business Development Unit and that is attached to these notes.

Jane informed the members of the job fair last week in Carteret in the discussion about companies not getting back to us about who they hire from one of our positive recruitments or job fairs. All were disturbed by the information that companies schedule people for interviews and the people do not show up for the interview. The group also noted the unemployed are not realistic about expected salary in this economy.

The members were informed that two new business groups have formed in the county, Central Jersey Business Alliance and Tri County Chamber of Commerce. This is a concern as it simply dilutes the effectiveness of each organization. With the MCRCC already in place and active, these two complicate the process of doing outreach to business in the county, especially since there are numerous local Chambers of Commerce as well.

Discussion held on the issues of how the Applicant Tracking System (ATS) throws out good as well as bad resumes along with the wage gap that exists in today's job market.

Carla Cefalo provided information on the County GIS Portal system that will be rolled out shortly. She indicated that in addition to parcel location, ownership, cost for purchase there are various other reports such as traffic Count, demographics/income profiles and retail market place profiles that will be

available to investors. Information on distance to waterfront, passenger stations and commercial freight lines also will be a part of the system, areas can be identified by warehousing/industrial, mom and pop stores up to Brownfield locations including municipal profiles with links directed to each municipality, incentives available per parcel by municipalities as well as other links. The County will have a Co-Start subscription which will allow for data collection and updating of info on the various parcels.

A marketing plan is being worked on for roll out of the GIS Portal. Ads will be going into NJ Biz, Industry magazines and other marketing media.

Sharita Brown shared that Amazon has a fulfillment center in Avenel opened and that Abcuss seems to have gotten the contract. She explained the Recovery4Jersey program and trying to get companies on board.

Bernice Venable expressed that the state of NJ needs to do more to assist companies because many are looking to leave the state. She shared that recovery funds hasn't touched many small businesses. Carla offered that many businesses were still waiting for the \$50,000 check. There is lots of red tape, and it could be a full time job to get it completed. Recovery effort was a big letdown. State was not responsive not even BAC.

Elayne McClaine added that the Sandy funding was more for disaster prevention and preparedness to make sure businesses are prepared, especially for any future disaster. EDA funds were not really for disaster recover. Many companies that were indirectly affected were not aware. Funds seemed to be designed for companies at a certain level of prosperity and not those that were fragile.

Bernice commented on the issues of minority business owners and the RFP requirement for subcontractors with the State to use minority owned businesses. She is concerned that no one at the State is monitoring or enforcing this requirement, to ensure those on the list are being given consideration. She indicated that state needs to enforce sub-contracts who are to be in compliance. Delaware State was cited as an example of good enforcement of this responsibility.

Sharita mentioned that in Essex, Marjorie Perry who owns a construction company had a similar concern but now based on her own efforts of approaching some is not benefitting from it.

Nina Rios-Rivera asked about the Super Bowl and minority contractors in the process. Bernice stated she had a little piece of the pie, but that there were not enough of minority contractors that benefitted from the larger piece. Elayne mentioned that the SBDC got some business for some of their clients, such as in the food service, i.e. catering and hostess. She further stated those who register, benefit more from the federal requirement with the set aside for disadvantaged requirement than from the local state registration under the MBO requirement. She feels that the State needs a body for compliance if they get a grant.